



## Do They Hear You When You Cry

By Fauziya Kassindja, Layli Miller Bashir

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For Fauziya Kassindja, an idyllic childhood in Togo, West Africa, sheltered from the tribal practices of polygamy and genital mutilation, ended with her beloved father's sudden death. Forced into an arranged marriage at age seventeen, Fauziya was told to prepare for *kakia*, the ritual also known as female genital mutilation. It is a ritual no woman can refuse. But Fauziya dared to try.

This is her story--told in her own words--of fleeing Africa just hours before the ritual *kakia* was to take place, of seeking asylum in America only to be locked up in U.S. prisons, and of meeting Layli Miller Bashir, a law student who became Fauziya's friend and advocate during her horrifying sixteen months behind bars. Layli enlisted help from Karen Musalo, an expert in refugee law and acting director of the American University International Human Rights Clinic. In addition to devoting her own considerable efforts to the case, Musalo assembled a team to fight with her on Fauziya's behalf. Ultimately, in a landmark decision in immigration history, Fauziya Kassindja was granted asylum on June 13, 1996. **Do They Hear You When You Cry** is her unforgettable chronicle of triumph.

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## **Do They Hear You When You Cry** By Fauziya Kassindja, Layli Miller Bashir Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #232838 in Books
- Published on: 1999-01-12
- Released on: 1999-01-12
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.05" h x 1.13" w x 5.29" l, .90 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 529 pages

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Fauziya Kassindja describes her upbringing in a small Western Africa village as "part modern, part traditional, and Muslim throughout." Her Muslim father did not force his daughters to wear veils and encouraged their individualism. Most importantly, Kassindja's father instilled in her a distrust and fear of female circumcision, a controversial procedure still performed in many parts of the world. Tragically for Fauziya, he would die an untimely death, but his emphatic disgust at this dangerous and life-threatening operation had a remarkable effect on his daughter. She would flee the country just hours before her own circumcision, eventually arriving in the United States, where she faced an immigration nightmare.

Fauziya recounts her harrowing ordeals in both Africa and the United States with eloquence and remarkable depth. Her initial naïveté in assuming that she would automatically gain asylum only adds to the tragedy of her story, as she instead faces isolation and religious persecution in high-security prisons. She graphically describes the horrors of strip searches and a terrible sickness that was ignored by prison staff.

This is a book of unspeakable despair put into words as well as a remarkable friendship forged between Fauziya and her lawyer (and contributing editor) Layli Miller Bashir, who was at the fore of Fauziya's case and brought national attention to the plight of these females seeking asylum. Fauziya gained her political asylum in June 1996, but the book ends on a cautionary note; the immigration process for these women is still arduous and often unsuccessful.

#### From Library Journal

Kassindja was at the center of the landmark U.S. case that legitimized giving asylum to a woman who flees her country to avoid ritual genital mutilation. This is her story?and that of her lawyer, Bashir?who took up her cause after Kassindja was imprisoned by the INS upon arriving here from Togo.

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#### From [Booklist](#)

Alone, afraid, and naive--but hopeful--17-year-old Fauziya Kassindja, a refugee from her native Togo, arrived in the U.S. seeking asylum in December 1994. Fleeing a forced polygamous marriage at the hands of her recently deceased father's relatives, she would have been forced to undergo "cleansing," the horrifying ritual of female genital mutilation (FGM), a practice resulting in painful suffering, and occasionally death, for women and girls in many parts of the world. Fauziya, in her innocence, did not anticipate the harsh cruelties she would endure upon her arrival in the U.S.: inhumane conditions and abusive guards in four prisons where she was detained for more than 16 months; callous Immigration and Naturalization Service personnel; lack of urgently needed medical attention and a deep depression that threatened to destroy her very spirit. Nor could she have anticipated the wealth of support that would come to her through the deeply committed women and men on her legal team, from other detainees with whom she forged an unbreakable bond, and through her own unshakable religious beliefs. Coauthored by Fauziya's key provider of legal and moral support, this is an intense and suspenseful account of the roller coaster of hope and despair during the arduous process of winning asylum. A fast-paced, can't-put-it-down book--shocking, heartbreaking, and inspiring. *Grace Fill*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Wayne Martin:**

The actual book Do They Hear You When You Cry has a lot details on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of gain. The book was compiled by the very famous author. Tom makes some research just before write this book. This particular book very easy to read you can obtain the point easily after reading this book.

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